

In Britain, the clergy endeavor to make us believe that tithes and church rates are of divine institution. This pretended right of demanding church dues, more than the secular power gives, is treating men like asses. Indeed it is depriving them both of their money and senses at the same time. Though men of any religion obey the laws when once made, yet they cannot believe the church has any other claim but what the Magistrate gives her;——yet, when they pay, they will both think and say they are ill applied, and the king is badly informed.——Christians, though they may bear burdens, when they can obtain no redress, yet they are worse than asses thus tamely to consent to creating of them;——and when they know they cannot be created without their consent.

To think the posterity of a people, whose fathers had purchased them a freedom with the price of their blood and fortunes, that they should [88] basely sell that freedom for a pot of ale, and a shake of the hand, in flattery and deceit, is a most shocking consideration.

What a weak religion must it be, that needs anything to support it but what proceeds from voluntary consent and good will. It is strange that the Christian religion cannot maintain its ground by the same means that it gained it.

I was educated myself in the principles of the church of England, and have duly examined most other dissenting sects, and I can't say any of them is sounder or freer from error in their principles than she.——But this maintaining of the clergy, by establishment, suppose it don't corrupt a true minister, yet it is the very cause that makes ordinary wicked lazy men creep into orders, purely for a livelihood or office of profit, to get gain in an easy and lazy way.

And as to the different sects, I look upon all of them to have been by good men at first;——and we see they all degenerate in time as well as she.

These different sects and opinions are a balance to the sad depravity which the human mind is subject to; for had nature allowed it to have been possible for any one sect to have been so established by Law, as to have been wholly secured from the Attacks of, and from being exposed by dissenting sects,——no absurdity in the world but could have been imposed on the human mind.——Neither do I know that it is an article of the church of England to force a maintenance for their Clergy; or that it is in any of their creeds, but